

# Joseph: God in Control

Genesis 37-50

March 3, 2011

## The Mystery of Providence

The Bible clearly affirms the existence of evil...and that evil is a servant of God.

“Providence” (from *pro video*) means, “to \_\_\_\_\_ something in advance.”

How can God be totally in charge, and people be totally free,  
and their actions not collide again and again?

The classic answer is the notion of *concurrency*. Events fall into four categories:

<i>Good good</i>	Everything that _____ does
<i>Bad good</i>	All the “good” things that _____ do
<i>Bad bad</i>	Most of what Al Capone did
<i>Good bad</i>	The amazing account of Joseph

Events and circumstances may be evil in a *proximate* sense, but for the one who trusts God, all events will *ultimately* be a blessing (Romans 8:28).

*“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

Cambridge researchers have learned that as long as the first and last letters of a word are intact, our brains can “read” the rest.

## The Ultimate Good News / Bad News Story (chpts 37, 39-41)

*Dad loved you best!*

Exactly what kind of coat did Joseph wear? (37:3)  
This was far more than a neutral fashion statement.

Our true character is revealed when life doesn’t turn out the way we expected.

Betrayal by \_\_\_\_\_ (37:12-36)  
*But...* Joseph is sold to Potiphar.

Framed by a would-be \_\_\_\_\_ (39:1-23)  
*But...Joseph is blessed by God in prison.*

Forgotten by an ungrateful cupbearer (40:1-23)  
*But...Joseph is lifted up by \_\_\_\_\_.*

Joseph's ultimate reunion with his brothers (chpts 42-45) includes some of the Bible's most dramatic scenes.

### **The Hand of God...Even in the Midst of Evil**

Brothers: *"What is this that God has done to us?" (42:28)*

Jacob: *"Everything is against me!" (42:36)*

Joseph: *"Don't be distressed; don't be angry with yourselves.  
It was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you." (45:5)*

*"So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God." (45:8)*

*"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." (50:20)*

God's intentions swallow up human intentions.

In what is "good bad," God turns our evil motives and deeds into \_\_\_\_\_.